

DWIGHT L. MOODY
AND HIS MOTHER

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[Articles on Dwight L.
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Articles on Dwight L. Moody



DWIGHT L. MOODY



MRS. DWIGHT L. MOODY

America's Foremost Evangelist

HENRY WILLIAM RANKIN

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS have passed since the death of D. L. Moody, and fifty since his early work in Great Britain gave him world-wide reputation as the greatest evangelist of the last century. What in this service John Wesley was for English-speaking lands in the eighteenth century, that D. L. Moody was, beyond all others, in the nineteenth. Many others in the last century were eminent heralds of the gospel, but, by common consent, he became preeminent, although his own celebrity was the last thing that he sought. His life was spent in celebrating Jesus Christ, as Lord, Redeemer, and Friend of all, through whom we become reconciled to the will of God, have unhindered access to God, and learn to know God Himself as our own eternal good.

All over the world of men today the name of D. L. Moody is cherished for the hope, the help, the joy, the blessing that he brought into multitudes of lives, as his abiding influence does still. He was a means of life to this whole country, and to the entire English-speaking world, in a measure that can hardly be ascribed to any other one man of his time. His central enterprise was preaching the gospel; yet many who think of him as a great preacher little know his greatness as a man, the real extent of his influence, the range of his subsidiary activities, or the wealth of results proceeding from his central aim.

The maxim that he exemplified was: *Consecrate and concentrate* all the powers and purposes of life to a single aim, that whatever we do may be done for the glory of God and good of man, in view of what God is in Himself, and has already done, and will yet do for us. Thus, God Himself becomes our present and eternal portion, so that whatever we may have or lack, we are sure of Him, and enjoy Him forever, our chief good.

There is no space here to characterize

at large the leading evangelist of the century past, and founder of the Northfield Schools. His career was so extended, so unique, so rich in incident and product, that a dozen biographies might be written, all good, emphasizing different aspects of the man, though failing to exhaust the material and the interest. One feature, however, may be specified here. It is probable that no man of his time so multiplied himself, by calling into exercise the latent or unsuspected powers of others, men and women, to further the ends for which he lived. Certainly no Northfield student should ever leave the place without getting by heart the life of D. L. Moody. It was the present writer's privilege to be brought into close contact with the great evangelist during the last eighteen years of his life; and any one who may wish to know more fully the estimate formed in that relation, can find it as summarized for Henry Drummond, and at his request, at the close of his delightful book on the same friend.

When, twenty-five years ago, Mr. Moody died, Northfield lost her greatest citizen. But ten years later, on the recurrent anniversary of his birth, a leading journal of Chicago commemorated him editorially as the first citizen of that great city, with the welfare of which he was so much and long concerned. He was, in fact, an unchallenged citizen of the world, besides possessing, as surely as the first apostle to the nations, the freedom of the city that is above. When he left us his going was like a triumphal progress to take a kingdom.

No man was ever blessed with better mother or better wife; and that accounts for much that the daughters of Northfield may well heed. Heaven ordered this for him, as he never doubted, and would do as much for all, if all were as willing to have Heaven rule. He never failed to acknowledge the source of these gifts; but Heaven is always giving benefits for

which it gets no thanks. In the measure of original and masterful personality a man, even when he is a good man, is difficult for most women to handle without some loss of self-respect; but the mother and the wife of D. L. Moody knew exactly how to take him. So deeply and graciously they impressed him by their own wisdom, without self-assertion, by their own winsome characters, so unselfish though self-poised, that they kept him from many mistakes, encouraged him in many and grievous trials, sweetened the uses of adversity, immeasurably enriched his joys, and immensely enhanced his own value for the world. In the thousands of columns and pages published regarding him, too little has been told of the mother and wife, and little can be written here. But in these almost unexampled days of dishonor shown to both rights and duties of parents, and to the sacredness of marriage, it is well to keep in mind that neither marriage, nor the family, nor friendship is ever perfected, or ever seen at its best, where there is no common interest in God. The throne of grace is the best trying-place, and always love required must be inspired. No laws of nature are more unchangeable than these.

D. L. Moody was the son of a great mother, whose death occurred less than four years before his own. His tribute to her memory at the time was one of the most delightful ever rendered to a mother by a son, and in its entirety should be made available to all readers. [The HERALD prints it immediately following this article.] Good reasons can be found in her for his exceptional qualities and service. She was born Feb. 5, 1805, and by a singular coincidence he was born on the same day and month of 1837, when she was thirty-two. He was the sixth of nine children, twins being born after their father's death. All these children grew up to be good citizens, sharing in common many family traits; but among them he was unique, as Benjamin Franklin in a family of seventeen. To the present writer his mother once remarked, with a significant alternative in mind: "I always thought D. L. would be one thing or the

other." It was plain that he never could be anything by halves. Between mother and son was a peculiarly close bond, and in him her own greatness was reflected.

It is a saying of Emerson that "when the Master of the universe has points to carry in His government, He implants His will in the structure of minds." This induction can be corroborated from all Scripture and all history. Both parents had good antecedents, with a nature physically and mentally strong; but the husband's sudden death when Dwight was four years old, brought years of hardship in its wake that drove the widow to perpetual waiting upon God, and developed her unusual character. Her days were largely spent in a little kitchen; but its windows looked out upon the loveliest view enjoyed by any house in town, one of the loveliest in New England. She could never be persuaded to leave its humble tasks when her son was most ready to relieve her; yet she was fit company for the best society on earth. By nature and grace she might have ruled a realm, and the story of her noble life deserves more record than it has received.

To the soundest English lineage she united the soundest constitution, and from the silhouette likeness of her standing figure, made near the time of her marriage in 1828, it is easy to see she had been a fine-looking girl. But once she told the writer that when she was a girl she was not allowed on Sunday to look into her mirror. In the year of her marriage she entered the house where all her subsequent life was spent—a house built only five years earlier, or one hundred years before its recent renovation.

With these outward advantages went inward qualities in rare harmony: self-command and easy rule of others, native dignity that had no pretense, dauntless courage and common sense; accurate speech and ready wit, yet guarded tongue—grace seasoned with salt; an open mind and hand, and generous thoughts toward all, with unchanging deeps of affection for her children, and for the memory of her husband; faith, hope, and charity unfeigned, with efficient fidelity to the duty next at hand. These are the qualities by which she became a woman, a wife, a mother, and a friend, of character so strong, so balanced, so directed that inevitably she inspired the obedient love of all her children, and the rare admiration of all who knew her. Love required must be inspired, and the source of such inspiration is found best in such a character.

It is not surprising that one of her sons

became not only a prince among men but also what the Hebrew psalmist calls a man of the right hand of the Most High. From the chamber on that little hill where, day and night, she approached the throne of grace, came the refreshing streams of her son's wide ministry which have watered all the earth—like the rivers of Eden that, according to the oldest traditions of mankind, parted to the four quarters of the earth from a fountain on a high mount which rose directly from the center of the paradise on earth toward the paradise of God in heaven.

But if all this can be said of D. L. Moody's mother, what may not be said also of the wife, who made his home so sweet and beautiful with her presence, sharing with him every burden, every prayer, and every answer by which his life was filled with victory and blessed fruit? She also has left these earthly scenes to enter on her immortality; she, and the brothers, George and Edwin and Isaiah, and how many more, have in these few years past gone from our sight, that we may learn to live by faith in the unseen and eternal.

All that was best in their lives came through such faith. For the things that are seen are for a time, the things that are not seen are eternal. It has been well said that this is the first and last lesson of religion. By its religion every civilization stands or falls. If among religions Christianity is best, so also is that Christianity best which is nearest like its original. The factors that make up the life of every man are not two only, as often is supposed, but four. The four are: heredity, environment, free personality,



Mrs. Betsey Holton Moody, Mother of Dwight L. Moody. From a Photograph Taken in Her Home When She Was in Her Eighty-Seventh Year

and the supernatural providence of God.

Nothing greater can be said than this of D. L. Moody, that few have exemplified better than he did in the nineteenth century the Christian doctrine and practice of the first. Many still live who owe the best impulse and direction of their own lives to his influence, and the Northfield Schools remain to perpetuate his ideals.

East Northfield.

The Evangelist's Tribute to His Mother

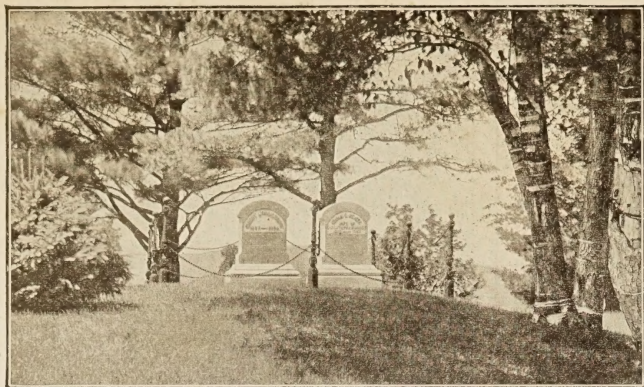
[Spoken at the Funeral Service, Jan. 29, 1896]

It is not the custom, perhaps, for a son to take part in such an occasion. If I can control myself I would like to say a few words. It is a great honor to be the son of such a mother. I do not know where to begin; I could not praise her enough. In the first place my mother was a very wise woman. In one sense she was wiser than Solomon; she knew how to bring up her children. She had nine children and they all loved their home. She won their hearts, their affections, she could do anything with them.

Whenever I wanted real sound counsel I used to go to my mother. I have traveled a good deal and seen a good many mothers, but I never saw one who had such tact as she had. She so bound her children to her that it was a great calamity to have to leave home. I had two brothers that lived in Kansas and died there. Their great longing was to get back to their mother. My brother who died in Kansas a short time ago had been looking over the Greenfield papers for some time to see if he could not buy a farm in this locality. He had a good farm there, but



Birthplace of Mr. Moody, at East Northfield



Round Top, Showing the Graves of Mr. and Mrs. Moody

he was never satisfied; he wanted to get back to mother. That is the way she won her family, she won them to herself.

I have heard something within the last forty-eight hours that nearly broke my heart. I merely mention it to show what a character she was. My eldest sister, her oldest daughter, told me that the first year after my father died she wept herself to sleep every night. Yet she was always bright and cheerful in the presence of her children, and they never knew anything about it. Her sorrows drove her to Him, and in her own room, after we were asleep, I would wake up and hear her praying, and sometimes I would hear her weeping. She would be sure her children were all asleep before she would pour out her tears.

And there was another thing remarkable about my mother. If she loved one child more than another no one ever found it out. Isaiah, he was her first boy; she could not get along without Isaiah. And Cornelia, she was her first girl; she could not get along without Cornelia, for she had to take care of the twins. And George, she couldn't live without George. What could she ever have done without George? He stayed right by her through thick and thin. She couldn't live without George. And Edwin, he bore the name of her husband. And Dwight, I don't know what she thought of him. And Luther, he was the dearest of all, because he had to go away to live. He was always homesick to get back to mother. And Warren, he was the youngest when father died; it seemed as if he was dearer than all the rest. And Sam and Lizzie, the twins, they were the light of her great sorrow.

She never complained of her children. It is a great thing to have such a mother, and I feel like standing up here today to praise her. And just here I want to say before I forget it, you don't know how she appreciated the kindness which was shown her in those days of early struggle. Sometimes I would come home and say such a man did so and so, and she would say, "Don't say that, Dwight; he was kind o me."

My father died a bankrupt, and the creditors came and swept everything we had. They took everything, even the kindling wood; and there came on a snow-storm, and the next morning mother said we would have to stay in bed until school time because there was no wood to make a fire. Then all at once I heard some one chopping wood, and it was my Uncle Sam. I tell you I have always had a warm heart for that uncle for that act. And that night there came the biggest load of wood I ever saw in my life. It took two yoke of oxen

to draw it. It was that uncle that brought it. That act followed me all through life, and a good many acts, in fact. Mr. Everett, the pastor of the Unitarian Church, I remember how kind he was in those days. I want to testify today how my mother appreciated that.

I remember the first thing I did to earn money was to turn the neighbor's cows up on Strowbridge Mountain. I got a cent a week for it. I never thought of spending it on myself. It was to go to mother. It went into the common treasury. And I remember when George got work we asked who was going to milk the cows. Mother said she would milk. She also made our clothes, and wove the cloth, and spun the yarn, and darned our stockings.

I thought so much of my mother I cannot say half enough. That dear face! There was no sweeter face on earth. Fifty years I have been coming back and was always glad to get back. When I got within fifty miles of home I always grew restless and walked up and down the car.

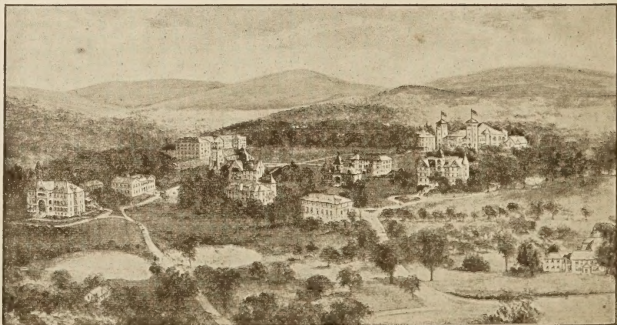
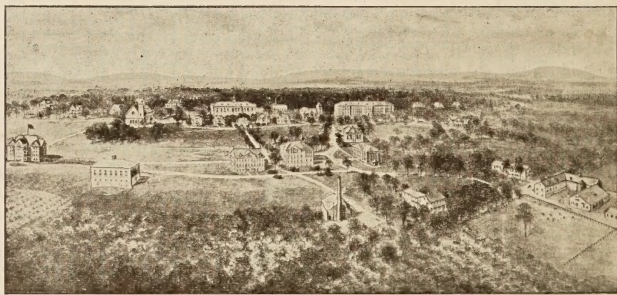
It seemed to me as if the train would never get to Northfield. For sixty-eight years she has lived on that hill, and when I came back after dark I always looked to see the light in mother's window. When I got home last Saturday night—I was going to take the four o'clock train from New York and get here at twelve; I had some business to do; but I suppose it was the good Lord that sent me; I took the twelve o'clock train and got here at five—I went in to my mother. I was so glad I got back in time to be recognized. I said, "Mother, do you know me?" She said, "I guess I do!" I like that word, that Yankee word "guess"! The children were all with her when she was taking her departure. At last I called, "Mother, mother." No answer. She had fallen asleep; but I shall call her again by and by. Friends, it is not a time of mourning. I want you to understand we do not mourn. We are proud that we had such a mother. We have a wonderful legacy left us.

One day mother sent for me. I went to see what she wanted, and she said she wanted to divide her things. I said, "Well, mother, we don't want anything you've got; we want you. We have got you, and that's all we want." "Yes, but I want to do something." I said to her, "Then write out what you want, and I will carry it out." That didn't satisfy her. Finally she said, "Dwight, I want them all to have something." That was my mother, and that was the way she bound us to her.

Now, I have brought the old Bible, the family Bible, for it all came from that book. That is about the only book we had in the house when father died, and out of that book she taught us. And if my mother has been a blessing to this world, it is because she drank at this fountain. I will read here a few verses which she has marked.

"Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her."

She has been a widow for fifty-four



Bird's-Eye Views of Mount Hermon School (top) and Northfield Seminary

years, and yet she loved her husband the day she died as much as she ever did. I never heard one word and she never taught her children to do anything but just reverence our father. She loved him right up to the last.

"She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands."

That is my mother.

"She considereth a field and buyeth it; with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good; her candle goeth not out by night."

Widow Moody's light has burned on that hill for fifty-four years to my knowledge. It has been burning there for fifty-four years, in that one room. We built a room for her, where she could be more comfortable, but she was not often there. There was just one room where she wanted to be. Her children were born there, her first sorrow came there, and that was where God had met her. That is the place she liked to stay, where her children liked to meet her, where she worked and toiled and wept.

"She stretcheth out her hands to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy."

Now, there is one thing about my mother, she never turned away any poor from her home. There was one time we got down to less than a loaf of bread. Some one came along hungry, and she says, "Now, children, shall I cut your slices a little thinner and give some to this person?" And we all voted for her to do it. That is the way she taught us.

"She is not afraid of the snow for her household; for all her household are clothed with scarlet."

She would let the neighbors' boys in, all over the house, and track in the snow; and when there was going to be a party she would say, "Who will stay with me? I will be all alone; why don't you ask them to come here?" In that way she kept them all at home, and knew where her children were. The door was never locked at night until she knew they were all in bed, safe and secure. Nothing was too hard for her if she could only spare her children.

The seven boys were like Hannibal, whose mother took him to the altar and made him swear vengeance on Rome. She took us to the altar and made us swear vengeance on whiskey, and everything that was an enemy to the human family; and we have been fighting it ever since and will to the end of our days.

My mother used to punish me; I honor her for that, I do not object to punishment. She used to send me out to get a stick. It would take a long time to get it, and then I used to get a dead stick if I could. She would try it and if it would break easily, then I had to go and get another. She was not in a hurry and did not tell me to hurry, because she knew all the time that I was being punished. I would go out and be gone a long time. When I came in she would tell me to take off my coat, and then she would put the birch on; and I remember once I said, "That doesn't hurt." She put it on all the harder, and I never did that the second time. And once in a while she would take me and she would say, "You know I would rather put this on myself than to put it on you." I would look up and see tears in her eyes. That was enough for me.

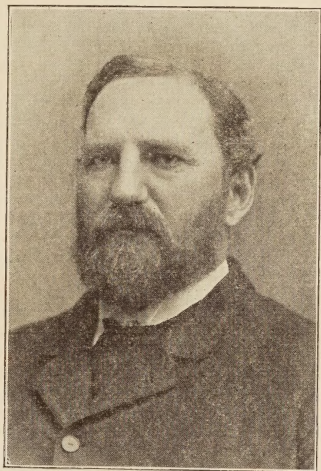
What more can I say? You have lived with her and you know about her. I want to give you one verse, her creed. Her creed was very short. Do you know what it was? I will tell you what it was. When

everything went against her this was her stay, "My trust is in God." "My trust is in God." And when the neighbors would come in and tell her to bind out her children, she would say, "Not as long as I have these two hands." "Well," they would say, "you know one woman cannot bring up seven boys; they will turn up in jail, or with a rope around their necks." She toiled on, and none of us went to jail, and none of us has had a rope around his neck. And if every one had a mother like that mother, if the world was mothered by that kind of mothers, there would be no need for jails.

"Leave thy fatherless children; he will preserve them alive."

Here is a book (a little book of devotions); this and the Bible were about all the books she had in those days; and every morning she would stand us up and read out of this book. All through this book I find things marked.

Every Saturday night—we used to begin to observe the Sabbath at sundown Satur-



H. N. F. Marshall of Boston, Who, as First Treasurer and Business Manager of the Northfield Schools, for Ten Years, by Unremitting and Graciously Service, Rendered the Most Efficient Aid in the Establishment of These Institutions. Mr. Marshall Had Been Associated in Some Business Transactions with Mr. H. F. Durant, Founder of Wellesley College, and the Three Men—Mr. Moody, Mr. Marshall, and Mr. Durant—Met Frequently at the Durant Home in Boston.

day night, and at sundown Sunday night we would run out and throw up our caps and let off our jubilant spirits—this is what she would give us Saturday night, and it has gone with me through life. Not all of it, I could not remember it all:

"How pleasant it is on Saturday night
When I've tried all the week to be good."

And on Sunday she always started us off to Sunday school. It was not a debatable question whether we should go or not. All the family attended.

I do not know, of course we do not know, whether the departed ones are conscious of what is going on on earth. If I knew that she was I would send her a message that we are coming on after her. If I could, I believe I would send a message after her, not only for the family, and the town, but for the seminary. She was always so much interested in the young ladies of the seminary. She seemed to be as young as any of them and entered into the joys of the young people just as much as any one. I want to say to the

young ladies of the seminary, who acted as maids of honor to escort my mother down to the church this morning, that I want you to trust my mother's Saviour.

I want to say to the young men of Mount Hermon, you are going to have a great honor to escort mother to her last resting-place. Her prayers for you ascended daily to the throne of grace. Now, I am going to give you the best I have; I am going to do the best I can; I am going to lay her away with her face toward Hermon.

I think she is one of the noblest characters this world has ever seen. She was as true as sunlight; I never knew that woman to deceive me.

I want to thank Dr. Scofield for the comforting words he has brought us today. It is a day of rejoicing, not of regret. She went without a pain, without a struggle, just like a person going to sleep. And now we are to lay her body away to await His coming in resurrection power. When I see her in the morning she is to have a glorious body. The body Moses had on the Mount of Transfiguration was a better body than God buried on Pisgah. When we see Elijah he will have a glorious body. That dear mother, when I see her again, is going to have a glorified body. (Looking at her face) God bless you, mother; we love you still. Death has only increased our love. Good-by for a little while, mother. Let us pray.

Baptized with Power

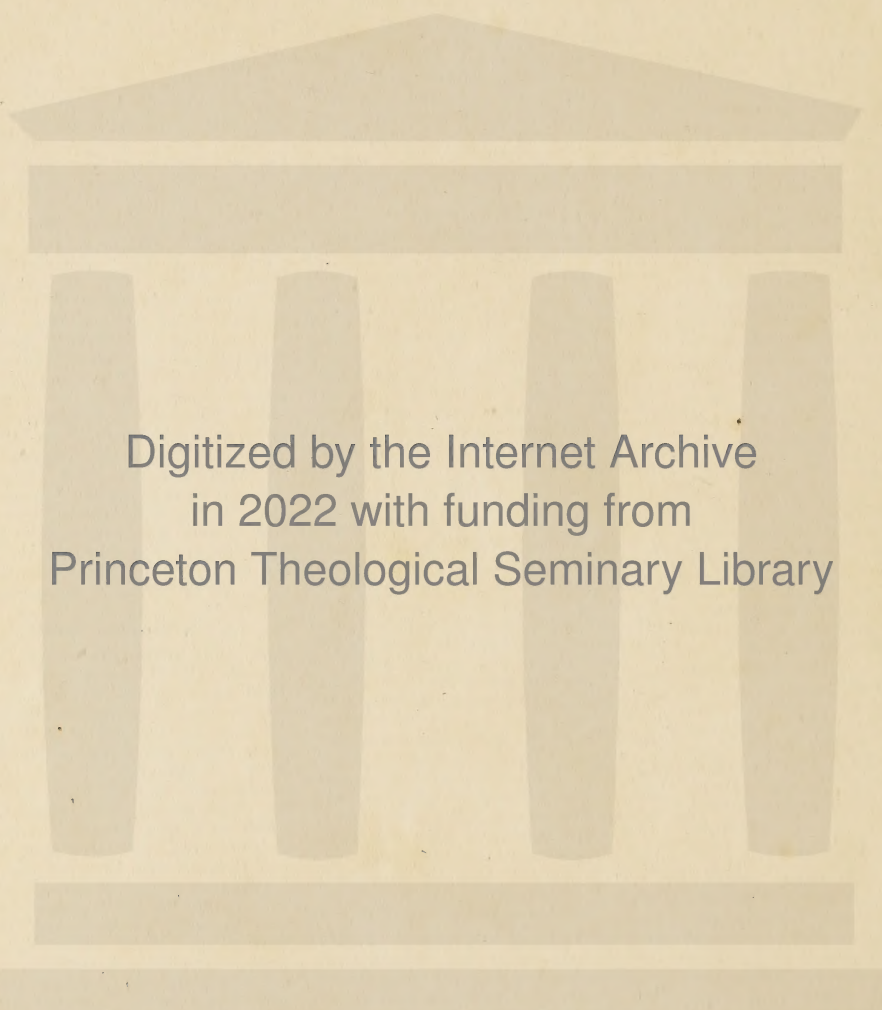
[Extract from an Address on "The Conditions of a Successful Ministry" Delivered before the Graduating Class of Princeton Theological Seminary Last May by Rev. David J. Burrell, D. D., and Printed in *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin*]

I HAVE reason to thank God for a close friendship in my early life with that prince of evangelists, Mr. Moody. "Young man," he used to say to me in my student days, "young man, be sure you honor the Holy Ghost!"

In the Chicago fire of 1872, his home and his preaching station, Farwell Hall, were burned out and he was left high and dry. On an eastward bound train he continued in prayer saying, "O Lord, I have never been what I ought to be, I never have realized my ideal of service. Help me now to begin all over again. Baptize me with power. Come, Holy Spirit, come!"

On reaching New York he found quarters in the old Metropolitan Hotel, where, all the following day, he kept on praying the same prayer, "O God! give me power! Fill me with zeal and a passion for souls. Come, Holy Spirit, come!" Late in the afternoon Major Whittle knocked at his door and, receiving no response but hearing a voice within, threw it open. There stood Mr. Moody in the middle of the room, with face uplifted and bathed in tears, saying over and over "No more! My Lord, no more!" He had received the blessing. The Holy Ghost had come in power and filled him to the lips. And thereafter, in his evangelistic tours in America and across the seas, he reaped such harvests as never before. Souls came flocking to Christ, as doves to their windows.

—One of the strongest elements of his [Moody's] character was his determination to succeed in whatever he undertook; indeed, he once said to me that when he first went into his uncle's store in Boston he made up his mind that he would sell more goods than any other one, and it was said that he went out on the street and urged passers-by into the store to make purchases. (From "George C. Stebbins: Reminiscences and Gospel Hymn Stories.")



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